

Evidentiality and epistemic modality at the semantics/pragmatics interface

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This paper develops an analysis of the Cusco Quechua (CQ) evidentials as illocutionary modifiers within Segmented Discourse Representation Theory (SDRT) (Asher and Lascarides 2003), building on Faller (to appear). Evidentiality is encoded by three enclitics in this language, illustrated in (1) and described in detail in Faller (2002).¹

- (1) Para-sha-rqa-n-**mi**/**si**/**chá**
rain-PROG-PST-3-BPG/REP/CONJ
p='It is raining.'
EV: -*mi*: *s* saw it raining
-*si*: *s* was told that it was raining
-*ch*: *s* conjectures that it was raining

The theoretical debate in the literature on evidentiality has revolved around the question whether it is a category in its own right or should be subsumed under epistemic modality. A related question is whether or not evidentiality is a propositional-level category, that is, whether or not evidentials contribute to the truth conditions of an asserted proposition. The CQ evidentials are morpho-syntactically distinct from epistemic modals, and Faller (2002) argues they do not contribute to propositional content but are illocutionary modifiers. The argument is based on the application of a number of standard linguistic tests, including the so-called assent/dissent test, scope behaviour with respect to conditionals, negation, tense, and in questions (Faller 2002, Faller submitted, Papafragou in press). These will be summarized in the first part of the paper. The tests will also be applied to the epistemic modals in CQ during fieldwork in the summer. There are two kinds: an irrealis suffix, and two modal enclitics. Both types can co-occur with the evidential enclitics and with each other, as shown for the high certainty enclitic in (2).

- (2) Juan-**puni-n** suwa-qa ka-n-**man**.
Juan-CERT-BPG thief-TOP be-3-IRR
p='Juan must be the thief.'
EV: *s* has best possible grounds for *p*

It is hypothesized that the tests will show that the irrealis suffix is a propositional operator, while the enclitic *-puni* is potentially an illocutionary modifier, that is, not contributing to propositional content but providing the speaker's comment on it. If correct, this accords with Krifka's (2004) observation that some German modals operate on the speech act level. An analysis of illocutionary-level evidentials and modals will be proposed using the cognitive modelling language of SDRT. Evidentials will be analyzed as contributing an evidential sincerity condition, while illocutionary epistemic modals will be analyzed as modifying the degree of strength of the assertive sincerity condition.

¹Abbreviations: 3: third person, BPG: best possible grounds, CERT: certainty, CONJ: conjunctive, EV: evidential value, IRR: irrealis, *p*: proposition, PROG: progressive, PST: past, REP: reportative, TOP: topic.

References

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